



Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641

Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*

V. Rev. David Smoley – *Retired*

Lord's Day – 12-1-2019

Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:

www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone

7. Venerable Botolph of Iken (7th c.). Prophet Nahum (7th c. B.C.). Righteous Philaret the Merciful of Amnia in Asia Minor (792). Martyr Ananias of Persia.

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

Pray with out ceasing...

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN

YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need - Fr. Isaac, Fr. Samuel, Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Debbie, TK, Eliza, Paul, Pearl, William, Joseph, Karen, John, Stavros, Nickolas, Timothy, Autumn, (Sergius), Judy (child), James, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Mary, Christine, Rick, Samuel, Timothy, Andrew, Kati, Simeon, Debbie, Christopher, Megan, Andrew, Margret-Ann, Lorelly, Thomas, Evan The Homebound Ann, Tanya, Richard, Ruth, William, Claudia Catechumen- Christian ... Travelers ... Military servers...Greg ...Newly Departed -Theona Sekel, Helen Miller, Anna Anderson, Rodney Senyo, Josephine Olnik, Marilyn Filipos, Irene Hoovler...Departed Orthodox Jeff, Catherine, John B., John S., Nickoli, Ann, Katherine, Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy... Special requests... Gilbert, Joanne, Phyllis, Jeniene, Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Zera, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Nick, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Mareen, Lynn,, Zach, Rod, Maragret, Helen, Dan, Jonathan, Donna.

Holy Hymns:

Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Your Cross You destroyed death.

To the thief You opened Paradise.

For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.

And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,

to proclaim that You are risen, //

granting the world great mercy.

Tone 2 Troparion (Prophet Nahum)

We celebrate the memory of Your Prophet Nahum, O Lord; through him we beseech You: "save our souls!"

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold mankind captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The Savior has come to those in faith:// enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

Tone 4 Kontakion (Prophet Nahum)

Illumined by the Spirit, your heart was a vessel of illustrious prophecy, seeing far-off things as though they were present. Therefore, we venerate you, glorious prophet Nahum.

Tone 7 Prokeimenon

The Lord shall give strength to His people. The Lord shall bless His people with peace. (Ps 28/29:11)

v: Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord! (Ps 28/29:1)

Tone 7

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. (Ps 91/92:1)

v: To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night. (Ps 91/92:2)

Holy Scripture:

Mark 16:1-8 (2nd Matins Gospel) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away - for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." So they

went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Ephesians 2:14-22 (Epistle)

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Luke 18:18-27 (Gospel)

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Holy Services and Activities

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, *not giving up meeting together*, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (St. Paul to the Hebrews 10:23-25)

Today: Dec. 1st - CGS and Matins 9:00am Divine liturgy following

Thurs. Dec. 5th - Great Vespers - St. Nicholas Day- 4pm

Fri. Dec. 6th - Divine Liturgy - St Nicholas Day- 9:30am - Matins 9:00am

Sat. Dec. 7th - BAKE SALE 10-1pm Sat (Sun. 12-1) Akathist to St. Ambrose of Milan - 9:00am

Sun. Dec. 8th - St. Nicholas Party during Coffee Hour - visit from St. Nick, games, food...

Wed. Dec. 11th - Hospitality Team meeting 12noon - Akathist to St. Andrew - 4:00pm

Sat. Dec. 14th - Prospora Making 11-2pm

Sun. Dec. 15th - CGS and Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy following

- Parish council meeting following Coffee Hour

Nativity Services:

Sun. Dec. 22nd - Forefeast of Nativity -

Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy following

Tue. Dec 24th - Royal Hours - 9am

- Holy Supper - 5pm

- Compline/Vigil - 6:30pm

Wed. Dec. 25th - **NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST** Divine Liturgy - 9:30am

Team Activities:

Missions Team is continuing its food bank drive for the Edinboro University Food pantry. This helps students on campus who have very little. The bank is presently very low. Dry goods and food that college students would like are preferred. You can bring any donations to the parish hall; there will be a marked box.

--The team is also collecting used clothing for a swap among our parish members and then donating what is left to the local Thrifty Threads. Clothing can be placed in the first back classroom in the hall. See Anna for more details

--The Missions team is preparing for a trip to Alaska in July of 2020 -please donate toward their trip as you are

able, just mark your donation in the offering as “Alaska Trip” as you give on Sunday.

Education Team is continuing the present schedule of Atrium 1 meeting at 9am on Sunday Mornings.

*It has been proposed that we have a Once a month Family Day on the First Saturday with Atrium 1, Atrium 2, youth quest, Mom's Group, Men's fellowship. Please let me know if this is a good idea to open this time up. I will not schedule it until I hear some feedback from parents and families involved. Atrium 1 would still continue to be offered on Sunday mornings as well.

Activities- There will be a number of events for youth and families through out the year, including: Vertical Jump in Erie- (last week: 15+ attended) Learning Prospora Making (Dec. 14th 11am-2pm) Ray's Bike Park (TBA), Ski Trip (TBA), Summer Camp out, etc.

Hospitality Team will meet on *Wed. Dec. 11th at 12noon* - The team will be forming recommendations for Parish council for the upcoming year's food events, planning Coffee hour, and preparing our greeting protocol for services and other events.

Outreach Team will meet this month on Mon. Dec 2nd at 7pm in parish rectory office to plan our year's outreach events. The goal of the OT is to make people in our community familiar with the Orthodox Faith. Including the blessing of French Creek (Tues. Jan 7th), and Lake Erie (Jan. 25th). More events will be announced in the coming weeks. The team sponsored an orthodox bible study at the brewery in Meadville and recently attended a music festival and had a booth to attract questions about Orthodoxy.

Parish Council welcomes new elected members. There will be a prayer of blessing and commissioning on Sun. Jan. 5th 2020 for all council members. Council is also seeking members of the parish to be on a planning team for the upcoming 100th year anniversary to be held in 2021. Council is also looking for 2 auditors. If you are interested in being on any team of the parish please let parish council Pres. Nathan or Fr. Daniel know.

Choir - The parish is in the process of updating our liturgical books into the language of the day. So there will be some different words and phrases used throughout the services. "Thee and thou" have been changed to "you and your", and old English language phrases and words are being changed to more up to date usage. For example, will be gradually pronouncing "Amin" instead of "Amen" (A Russian practice, and correct Greek pronunciation), because this is a more proper pronunciation of the original liturgical language. The Lord's Prayer will be left alone for now as we presently say the prayer, with Thee's and thou's included. Remember we have become conditioned by our western influence, and we must defend and keep the tradition passed on from the Holy Apostles. Be in prayer and express patience as the choir, readers and Fr. Daniel navigate this transition, it will be beneficial for us all. The Choir will also be adding new music, and updating all our services over the next few years. The Choir is encouraging youth and families to participate in the Matins service, the Wed. Evening prayer services and Sat. Great Vespers, with their voices and serving in the altar. Having more understandable language and more opportunities to serve and pray will encourage our young people to participate more fully.

Ladies Altar Society will be meeting this month (TBA). They continue to make pirogues and are meeting for prayer and social events monthly. Please see Tanya s for more information.

Our **St. Nicholas Bake Sale** will be held on Sat. Dec. 7th from 10-1pm. There will be an Akathist to St. Ambrose of Milan at 9am. Please bring your fresh baked goods and Christmas rummage items to the parish hall that morning. See Lisa for more information.

A **Prospora Making Workshop** will be held for youth and families (anyone is invited) on Sat. Dec. 14th from 11-2pm. The workshop will include the learning of the recipe, the prayers and movements for preparing and making holy bread for Divine Liturgy and Great Vespers.

Plan to attend **Holy Supper** if you have not in years past this is a wonderful family event that reminds us of our history and orthodox heritage from the old country of holy Rus, and all the Nativity scriptures are read, the different foods served teach us about our holy faith and the Incarnation of God.

Holy Words- Thanksgiving as Mystical Communion...

"This is good. This is bad." In one form or another, we divide the world into light and dark. It might take the form, "I like this. I do not like that." What we find easy are the things we see as good and the things we like. If a day is filled with such things, we are likely to be happy. If the day is marked by things we do not like, then we are unhappy. We find it easy to be thankful for the good things. Everybody is grateful for things they like. Indeed, it is something of a tautology to be thankful for things we like – even the gentiles do the same. Of course, our days are not filled with good things that we like. Our days are often a mix – good and bad – liked and unliked. This reality defines the path of modern persons: we seek to *maximize* the good and *minimize* the bad. Ronald Reagan, an icon of modern America, liked to quote a song from the 40's: "You've got to accentuate the positive, Eliminate the negative, Latch on to the affirmative, No room for Mister In-Between."

This is modernity in its prime. The modern myth is bound up with the "better world," the notion that through proper management and applications of science and technology (and all of the so-called "sciences"), we can make the world a better place – meaning that we will be able to eliminate the negative and maximize our pleasure. Pleasure is equated with the good, while suffering is seen as inherently bad. Modernity seeks to turn the world into a candy store (without diabetes).

The most bizarre outcomes of modernity's false philosophy can be seen in today's campus cults who demand "safe places" – defined as a world without discomfort or contradiction. "You must not say this, think that, wear this, eat that, drink this, and on and on, because these things are bad, because these things create pain (my imagined pain), and you are evil." It's a brave new world that is being "bettered," but I suspect very few will want to live in it.

My continuing critique of modernity has nothing to do with technology, medicine, science, etc. None of those things are "modern" in and of themselves. Modernity is a set of ideas, not a time in history. One of its most subtle bits of propaganda is to pass itself off as a historical period, and, even, as the inevitable outcome of everything that has gone before. To be "unmodern," is therefore, to be "out-of-date," "backward," "Neanderthal," "positively Medieval," or some such descriptive. Modernity is propaganda parading as history.

It is also ungrateful.

There is a classic Orthodox prayer set for the morning:

O Lord, grant that I may meet all that this coming day brings to me with spiritual tranquility. Grant that I may fully surrender myself to Thy holy Will. At every hour of this day, direct and support me in all things. Whatsoever news may reach me in the course of the day, teach me to accept it with a calm soul and the firm conviction that all is subject to Thy holy Will. Direct my thoughts and feelings in all my words and actions. In all unexpected occurrences, do not let me forget that all is sent down from Thee.

Grant that I may deal straightforwardly and wisely with every member of my family, neither embarrassing nor saddening anyone. When I first encounter this prayer, I found it impossible to say it. Instead, its un-prayed presence, for me, constituted wrestling with God.

Is God at work in all things and are all things being brought to a good conclusion? Are the terrible things that happen to me or to another devoid of God or, are they, somehow the work of the Cross within history? This last question proved to be an open door for me. God does not stand outside of history manipulating, controlling one thing or another, aloof and judging. The Cross of Christ is not a single event of three hours duration, a mere payment for sin. The Cross is the revelation of a mystery-at-work that has been hidden from the ages but has always been true. Christ is the "lamb slain from the foundations."

Christ reveals to us that He not only loves those who suffer, but He *becomes* those who suffer (Matt. 25:40).¹ Christ becomes what we are, uniting us to Himself, that we might become what He is. On the Cross, we see, not only the suffering of God, but the suffering of the whole world, *everywhere and through all time*.² Like Joseph the Patriarch, we are able to say of suffering, "You meant it to me for evil, but the Lord meant it to me for good." (Gen. 50:20) With this in mind, we are able to give thanks always and for things, not because we think suffering itself is good, but because the One who alone is good has Himself become our suffering. By the same token, when we ourselves do good to those who are in need, and unite ourselves to them, we also unite ourselves to God whose providence cares for all at all times and all places.³

Thanksgiving, particularly with this understanding in mind, is a continual act of offering and sacrifice, the very heart of a Eucharistic life. "Thine own, of Thine own, we offer unto Thee, on behalf of all and for all."

No doubt, Christians will continue in doing good. However, in spite of every modern mythology, the world will not be a "better" place. Evil things will continue to happen (many of them done in the name of a better world). Modernity, however, cannot bear suffering, which is truly tragic in that suffering is an inevitable part of every life. The modern world's absence of a meaningful narrative with regard to suffering – other than to eradicate it – perpetuates and cultivates a heart that is frequently unable to be grateful. Of course, if sufficient steps are taken to shield someone from the reality of suffering, a make-believe "better" world can be maintained for a space of time. This, in large part, is the origin of the cult of prosperity (in its many guises).

The Christian heart, on the other hand, is manifest most prominently in the giving of thanks. The central act of worship is itself the giving of thanks (*Eucharist* is from the Greek for "giving thanks"). In the very first paragraph of St. John Chrysostom's anaphora, we hear:

For all these things we give thanks to You, and to Your only-begotten Son, and to Your Holy Spirit; for all things of which we know and of which we know not whether manifest or unseen, The central act of Christian worship gives thanks *for all things*, to which the people say, "Amen."

The mystery of our salvation is found within the Cross of Christ, His suffering, death and resurrection. The fullness of that salvation reveals itself to us as we come to know that all things, known and unknown, those we see as good and those we see as bad, have been gathered together by God into Himself. It is there in that union (and there alone) that "all things work together for good." And there we give thanks. +Fr. Stephen Freeman